

In support of media diversity and FCC accountability
Commenting on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules:

I am aware that large media companies have spent considerable amounts of money to gain access to FCC commissioners, in order to ensure that their votes go their way.

I am aware that only the most limited public hearings have been held, and that Commissioner Copp unsuccessfully tried to get funding to hold more.

I am aware that the 1996 loosening of regulations did not lead to increased competition and lowered costs, but had the reverse effect.

I am aware that the major news media, controlled as they are by companies with a strong financial interest in the outcome of the review, have failed to inform the public of the importance of this review and the issues involved in it.

Finally, I am aware that this message is only one small scrap of "paper" opposing the tide of mooney.

However, I feel that it's my duty as a citizen, as well as my inclination, to remind the commission of its self-stated goals to promote competition, diversity and localism in the public airwaves.

I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

The right and duty to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge even further, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be degraded to a point that will seriously threaten the basis of democracy.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

Finally, I request the Congress to investigate this matter, regardless of the outcome of the review, and to act to increase the accountability of the FCC to the public it was formed to serve.

Thank you,

Don Dwiggins